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# Assembly California Legislature



ROCKY J. CHÁVEZ  
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COMMITTEES  
VICE CHAIR: EDUCATION  
BUDGET  
HEALTH  
HIGHER EDUCATION  
LEGISLATIVE ETHICS  
VETERANS AFFAIRS

BUDGET SUBCOMMITTEE NO. 2 ON  
EDUCATION FINANCE

Mr. Bill Honig, Chair  
History-Social Science Subject Matter Committee  
Instructional Quality Commission  
California Department of Education  
Curriculum Frameworks & Instructional Resources Division  
1430 N Street, Suite 3207  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Mr. Honig, Members of the History–Social Science Subject Matter Committee, Members of the Curriculum Framework and Evaluation Criteria Committee, and Members of the Instructional Quality Commission:

We have had an opportunity to review the *Draft History-Social Science Framework* that is currently circulating for public comment and wish to express our serious concerns with this revision. In general, the draft appears to be overly biased in numerous ways. It consistently conflates the racial civil rights movement with LGBT movements, weaves in identity politics, hyper-sexualizes moments in history, celebrates a bias against sexual morality, possibly presumes the sexual orientation of historical figures, attempts to instill a push for activism (which is different than civic responsibility), and uses descriptive words (like “hysteria” and “demagoguery”) that immediately instill prejudice.

The attached examples are far from exhaustive and are only pieces of a broad, strong theme of bias throughout the draft curriculum framework. It does not appear to be a balanced approach of presenting facts. We respectfully ask that you invite historians and other academics with less bias to help the Commission remove partiality, hyper-sexualization, identity politics, and political agendas. Please reject this draft and go back to the drawing board.

Thank you for your consideration and attention to our concerns and request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rocky J. Chavez".  
Colonel Rocky J. Chávez  
Assemblymember, 76th District

Here are just a few examples (not an exhaustive list) of concern with comments:

- In Grade Four we begin to see the conflation of movements and apparent presumption of historical figures:
  - “Students can also study the famous court case Mendez v. Westminster (1947), predecessor to Brown v. Board of Education (1954) that banned the segregation of Mexican students; student activism at San Francisco State University and UC Berkeley in the 1960s that forced the recognition of Asian American identity and history; the occupation of Alcatraz by California Indians in 1969-1971; and the emergence of the nation’s first gay rights organizations in the 1950s. In the 1970s, California gay rights groups fought for the right of gay men and women to teach, and, in the 2000s, for their right to get married, culminating in the 2013 and 2015 U.S. Supreme Court decisions Hollingsworth v. Perry and Obergefell v. Hodges.”  
[While these are historical events and movements for social changes, the way this is written appears to conflate racial and LGBT movements without making necessary distinctions. Are schools really expected to cover all of this, while making necessary distinctions, in Fourth Grade?]
  - “newspaper articles about the life of the stagecoach driver Charley Parkhurst, who was born as a female but who lived as a male, and who drove stagecoach routes in northern and central California for almost 30 years.” [How much is known about *why* Charley Parkhurst lived as a male? Could it have been merely pragmatic in order for her to work as a stagecoach driver? Why is this a point of emphasis in Fourth Grade?]
- Grade Six highlights an unnecessary bias of replacing “B.C.” (Before Christ) and “A.D.” (Anno Domini) with “BCE” (Before Common Era) and “CE” (Common Era). While presumably well intended to be more inclusive, the unavoidable reality (and historical truth) is that the dividing line for the change in time notation is still the birth of Jesus Christ (or Jesus of Nazareth). Replacing calendar notations with “BCE” and “CE” does not change that fact. Rather, it appears to be an attempt to erase the historical fact of Christianity’s role in the development of the calendar used by Western Civilization and throughout the world today.
- Grade Eight delves deeper into the sexualizing of history and repeats the subtle attempt to label a historical figure as transgender:
  - “This culture [slavery] included less restrictive norms around gender and sexuality that supported the formation of alternative family structures within enslaved communities.”
  - “...it [the West] allowed significant alterations in gender norms;...”
  - “Charley Parkhurst, for example, who was born as a female but who lived as a male, drove stagecoach routes in northern and central California for almost 30 years. Stagecoaches were the only way many people could travel long distances, and they served as a vital communication link between isolated communities. Parkhurst was one of the most famous California drivers, having survived multiple robberies while driving (and later killing a thief when he tried to rob Parkhurst a second time). Finally, gold rushes and western military life provide examples of frontier settings where men far outnumbered women and for this and many reasons, people lived less conventional lives.”[Why is Parkhurst mentioned in both Fourth and Eighth Grade?]
- Grade Nine includes some very disturbing changes to some of the elective courses, specifically Ethnic Studies, Sociology, and Women in United States History. The best way to highlight the problems is to compare the new draft frameworks for these subjects, in full, with their 2005 versions. The Ethnic Studies update is wrought with identity politics, the update to Sociology dumps the family as the primary form of society and replaces it with themes of oppression and injustice, and the update to Women in United States History takes a

very negative tone and adds language that will likely shed a positive light on abortion. In general, the updates seems less about history and more about agitating for activism:

- *Ethnic Studies Proposed (2016)*: "...central to any Ethnic Studies course is the historic struggle of communities of color, taking into account the intersectionality of identity (gender, class, sexuality, among others), to challenge racism, discrimination, and oppression and interrogate the systems that continue to perpetuate inequality." And "...overarching questions about the definitions of ethnic studies as a field of inquiry, economic and social class in American society, social justice, social responsibility, and social change."
  - *Ethnic Studies Then (2005)*: "In this course students focus on an in-depth study of ethnic groups, including their history, culture, contributions, and current status in the United States. They learn about the characteristics of America's ethnic groups and the similarities and differences of these groups in both their past and present experiences." And "...students should gain a deeper understanding of American society and its diverse ethnic composition and develop acceptance and respect for cultural diversity in our pluralistic society."
- *Sociology Proposed (2016)*: "Key learning goals include learning to think through the lens of social structure and culture – the sociological perspective; using scientific methods to research and assess society; developing critical thinking skills; understanding and identifying structural inequality, including prejudice and discrimination; and engaging in meaningful contributions to society."
  - *Sociology Then (2005)*: "The topics studied include the family as the basic unit of society; the structure of groups; group phenomena; the role of the individual in groups; society and communication; personality and the socialization process; social relations and culture; demography and human ecology; social processes; and social control."
- *Women in United States History Proposed (2016)*: \*\* The traditional and nontraditional roles of women, gender identity, and division of labor and society along gender lines...\*\* The impact of race, ethnicity, class, sexuality, and religion on women....\*\* Women's health and access to medical care...\*\* Gender discrimination today"
  - *Women in United States History Then (2005)*: \*\*Women as immigrants and as settlers, 1600–1900 (social change, status, and role)...\*\* Women in the formation of the nation, 1776–1865 (political status, intellectual leadership, and social conscience)...\*\* The American feminist revolution, 1940 to the present (economic equality, legal equality, and role modification), including the effects of World War II, the creation of the Women's Movement, the Equal Rights Amendment, the issues of fair pay and equity, and changing roles and responsibilities in the family" \*\* Creative endeavors, past and present."
- Grade Eleven includes the conflation of racial and sexual movements, biased commentary, identity politics, the over-sexualizing of history and appears to agitate for activism more than educate about history:
  - From the section on Industrialization, Urbanization, Immigration and Progressive Reform: "...In addition, in these growing cities, poorer young women and men who moved from farms and small towns to take up employment in factories, offices, and shops found themselves free from familial and community supervision in the urban environment. At nights and on weekends they flocked to new forms of commercialized entertainment such as amusement parks, dance halls, and movie theaters, and engaged in less restricted forms of intimacy, alarming some middle-class reformers. The more anonymous environment of cities also made space for men and women seeking relationships with one another and with someone of the same sex. By the end of the century, concepts of homosexuality and heterosexuality became defined as discrete categories of identity. This had consequences for the ways that people thought about intimate relationships between people of the same gender."
  - Under "The Rise of United States as a World Power" related to World War I: "Young men serving abroad found European ideas about race and sexuality very liberating."
  - Culture in the 1920s: "Within those arenas [speakeasies], LGBT patrons and performers became part of what was tolerated and even sometimes acceptable as LGBT-oriented subcultures grew and became more visible. At the same time, modern heterosexuality became elaborated through a growing world of dating

- and entertainment, a celebration of romance in popular media, a new prominence for young people and youth cultures, and an emphasis on a new kind of marriage that valued companionship.”
- “LGBT life expanded in 1920s Harlem. At drag balls, rent parties, and speakeasies, rules about acceptable gendered behavior seemed more flexible for black and white Americans than in other parts of society, and many leading figures in the “Renaissance” such as Hughes, Locke, Cullen, and Rainey were lesbian, gay, or bisexual.” [Did they self-identify as LGBT or is it *speculated* by some (and thus not known for sure) that these individuals may have been LGBT?]
  - “In addition to American political leaders’ reluctance to embrace change, many Americans did not embrace the social and cultural openness of the decade. These people found a voice in many organizations that formed to prevent such shifts. The Ku Klux Klan launched anti-immigrant and moralizing campaigns of violence and intimidation; vice squads targeted speakeasies, communities of color, and LGBT venues.” [Does this downplay the KKK’s primary target – specifically, African Americans? And does this phrase, “did not embrace the socials and cultural openness,” followed by the KKK as an example, conflate the sexual and racial changes at the time and suggest that those who “did not embrace” either of these trends could be associated with radical groups like the KKK? It’s subtle, but important.]
  - Under the Cold War section: “Senator Joseph McCarthy heightened Americans’ fear of Communists with his dramatic, public, yet ultimately demagogic allegations of large numbers of Communists infiltrating the government in the early 1950s. Although his colleagues in the U.S. Senate censured him, the influence of McCarthy outlasted his actions and explains why the term “McCarthyism” signifies the entire era of suspicion and disloyalty. Hysteria over national security extended to homosexuals, considered vulnerable to blackmail and thus likely to reveal national secrets.” [Is the use of “demagogic” and “hysteria” really appropriate for dispassionate history instruction?]
    - Contrast the above declaration of “demagoguery” with the reasonable 2005 version that invites debate: “Students should debate the appropriateness of loyalty oaths (an important issue at the University of California in the 1950s) and legislative investigations of people’s beliefs.”
  - “While the white middle class grew in size and power, poverty concentrated among minority groups, the elderly, and single-parent families. Betty Friedan also coined the term “feminine mystique” to describe the ideology of domesticity and suburbanization, which left white middle-class college educated housewives yearning for something more than their responsibilities as wives and mothers. Students can see the contradiction between the image of domestic contentment and challenges to the sex and gender system through the publication of and responses to the Kinsey reports on male and female sexuality in 1948 and 1953; the publicity surrounding Christine Jorgensen, the “ex-G.I.” transformed into a “blonde beauty” through sex-reassignment surgery in 1952; the efforts of the medical professional to enforce proper marital heterosexuality; and the growth of LGBT cultures.”
  - Under “Movements for Equality”:
    - [The quote below follows a discussion of various issues, including birth control (*Griswold v. Connecticut*) and abortion (*Roe v. Wade*)] “Over time, students can trace how, by the 1980s and 1990s, women made serious gains in their access to education, politics, and the workforce, though women continue to not be equally represented at the very highest ranks.” [This context appears to create bias related to abortion and contraception, linked to “serious gains” for women – issues that are still widely debated in society.]
    - “By the mid-1970s, LGBT mobilization led to successes: the American Psychiatric Association stopped diagnosing homosexuality as a mental illness; 17 states had repealed laws criminalizing gay sexual behavior; 36 cities had passed laws banning antigay discrimination; and gay-identified neighborhoods had emerged in major cities.” [Does the use of “successes” create bias?]
    - By talking about the nation’s AIDS hysteria, educators may be able to connect the early response to the epidemic to previous alarmist reactions in American history and the activism that confronted them.” [Again we see the word “hysteria,” and with it “alarmist.” Does “hysteria” include then Mayor Dianne Feinstein’s action to close San Francisco bath houses?] ]

- Grade Twelve:
  - “Their study will be grounded in the understanding that all citizens have certain inalienable rights such as due process, what to believe, and where and how to live.” [What’s wrong with the list in the Declaration of Independence? Are zoning and loitering laws, among other restrictions, violations of inalienable rights?]